

# **College Administrator-Student Communication via Twitter**

**Prof. Reima Al-Jarf**  
Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

**The International Conference on Telecommunications and ICT.  
Oran, Algeria,  
May 16-17, 2015.**

# COLLEGE ADMINISTRATOR-STUDENT COMMUNICATION VIA TWITTER

**REIMA S. AL-JARF**

King Saud University, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

## ABSTRACT

This paper analyzes the tweet content of the official Saudi language, literature and translation institutions' Twitter accounts to find out the types of issues tweeted and characteristics of administrator-student interaction. 115 students and 5 administrators were also interviewed to find out how they perceive their institution Twitter accounts and their advantages and shortcomings. It was found that only 20 (34%) language, literature and translation colleges and departments at 10 universities have Twitter accounts. Twitter is mainly used for announcements about admission, registration, drop-ad and withdrawal dates, exam schedules, class cancellation, extra-curricular activities, student clubs, and others. Announcements are mainly tweeted in Arabic, whereas English is used for course-related issues and language learning tips. Photos tweeted consist of images of course lists, memos, forms and schedules, activities and functions held by the students and faculty. No significant differences between male and female department Twitter accounts were found in the above aspects. Both students and administrators find Twitter to be very useful in sending notifications about the department logistics and functions in a quick and easy way. Results of the quantitative and qualitative analyses of the Twitter accounts under study together with student and administrator views are reported in detail.

**Keywords:** Twitter; tweets; followers; communication; interaction; content analysis; English department; translation college.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The past few years have witnessed a revolution in the use of social media technologies. Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Google+, Pinterest, Vimeo, Tumblr, LinkedIn and others are becoming more and more popular among students and faculty, in particular. The uses, benefits and purposes of social media technologies have been the focus of numerous studies in the literature. According to Faculty Focus, about 85% of faculty in the USA have a Facebook account, two-thirds are on LinkedIn, and 50% are on Twitter. However, 32% of the professors only have friended undergraduate students and 55% connect with some students after graduation. Some faculty are hesitant to friend students on Facebook. As for students, 69.8% are on Facebook every day, 63% have Twitter accounts and 49.8% check them daily [1]. In another study by [2] conducted at the

Biology Department at Ball State University, 55% of undergraduate students, 19% of graduate students and 12% of the faculty used three or more social media sites. About 41% of undergraduates, 56% of graduates and 47% of the faculty indicated that social media have the potential to be both constructive and distracting in the classroom environment.

Regarding the purposes of using Twitter and Facebook, [1] indicated that faculty who are already on Facebook tend to post comments, articles, and highlights related to the discipline. Facebook provides an instant connection with students. Faculty can keep track of graduates through a Facebook group page, can post job openings, graduate news (like congrats on new positions), and activities within the students' major. In addition, current students can connect with graduates from prior years in the Facebook

group for networking purposes. Likewise, [3] indicated that people use Twitter to send a text message from their cellphone to followers. Some use it to jot down a little reflection on their class. Twitter can be also used to send a message to the students to let them know that class has been canceled this week. Similarly, some college officials use Twitter to keep in touch with colleagues at other universities. Twitter is also a much faster way to get help from colleagues than sending an e-mail message to a list or posting a question on a blog. It is an easy way of communicating at no cost with friends and family and getting latest news, teaching resources and ideas [4]. In Turkey, [5] found that Twitter provides a faster, easier and economical means of interaction with the target audience in different parts of the world. In Australia, universities are using social media communication channels for a variety of purposes, such as marketing, student recruitment, student support and alumni communication [6].

Other studies investigated the use of social media in the classroom and in student-student interaction such as: Student and faculty assessment of the use of twitter in the higher education classroom [2], students' use of Twitter and their interactions with each other, content and interface [7], and higher education scholars' participation and practices on twitter [8].

Furthermore, the use of social media has a positive effect on students. A study by [9] found that doctoral students in the USA who used peer and university initiated technology outside the classroom had a higher sense of connectedness than those who did not. Those who used web-based communication technologies such as Skype, Facebook, and Twitter had a stronger sense of connectedness with their peers than those who chose to interact with peers via the phone or e-mail. Even non-academic interactions between students and faculty, [10] argued, make students feel more valued and important, which, in turn, may contribute to higher levels of student persistence.

As in other countries, the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter by Saudi higher education institutions, in general, and colleges of languages and translation, in particular, is increasing. However, a review of the literature revealed a dearth of studies that investigated the purposes for which Twitter is used by colleges of languages and translation, and how administrators and students view the use of social media by their colleges and departments. Since prior studies have not investigated the process of administrator and student communication at language and translation institutions, nor the features of administrator-student interaction on Twitter, this study aims to investigate the following: (i) The percentage of language and translation departments in Saudi Arabia having an official twitter account; (ii) the number of followers, tweets, photos and date created; (iii) issues and topics tweeted; (iv) which language is used for communication (English, Arabic or French; formal or informal; standard or colloquial); (v) the features of administrator-student interaction on Twitter; (vi) How administrator and students perceive the advantages and shortcomings of administrator-student communication via Twitter; and (vii) whether male and female departments differ in the above aspects.

Findings of the present study were based on an objective content analysis and classification of all the tweets (messages) in a sample of language and translation college/department Twitter accounts. A system of categories and subcategories, designed by the author, was used for that purpose. Findings were also based on interviews with students and administrators to explore their attitudes towards using Twitter and issues tweeted and their views on the advantages and drawbacks of using Twitter as a channel for administrator-student professional communication and interaction. Quantitative results of the tweet content analysis together with a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the students and administrators' responses to the interview-questionnaire will be reported.

Findings of the presents study shed light on the issues addressed by the department and college tweets, which issues are emphasized and which ones are under- or de-emphasized. It will inform administrators of whether students find those tweets beneficial, and the gaps that exist in administrator-student communication and interaction. Comparisons of the different institutions having a Twitter account and comparisons of the male and female institution Twitter accounts will shed light on the different issues tweeted and areas of interest and focus. Departments and colleges hesitant to start a Twitter account will get valuable information on the types of issues that can be tweeted and reasons for having an academic Twitter account.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Sample of Department/College Twitter Accounts

Twitter, as well as the websites of all 25 State universities in Saudi Arabia, were searched for languages, literature and translation departments and/or colleges that have a Twitter account. It was found that Colleges of Languages and Translation and English Departments at 10 Saudi state universities have Twitter accounts. But only 9 Twitter accounts from 8 universities were selected. Departments with fewer than 100 tweets, with unofficial accounts, those with similar English and translation tweet content and those that joined Twitter in 2015 were excluded as they do not have much content to be analyzed and as the data for the present study were collected the first few months of 2015. Thus the sample included the following: The Colleges of Languages and Translation at Princess Noura University (PNU) and King Saud University (KSU) both male and female campuses; the English Departments at King Khaled University (KKU) campus in Abha, and its branches in Dhahran Aljanoob (DhJ) and Remah College (RC), at Qassim University (QU), Majmaa University (MU) and Shaqra University (SU). In 7 accounts, the senders and receivers are females; KSU has 2 accounts: One for males (KSU-M) and one for females (KSU-F); and KKU's is for both male and female students and administrators. The

gender, total number of tweets, followers, photos, and date of joining Twitter are shown in Table 1.

### 2.2 Participants

A sample of 115 students majoring in English and French languages and translation at King Saud University, Princess Noura University, and Qassim University was randomly selected and interviewed either face-to-face, by phone or Facebook Messenger. In addition, a sample of 5 administrators (department heads and vice-deans) participating in those accounts was interviewed to find out the advantages and shortcoming of creating a college or department Twitter account for communicating with students.

### 2.3 Content Analysis

*Communication* is the exchange of information (a message) between two or more people. The communication process consists of several elements<sup>1</sup>: (i) The *sender* or *communicator*, i.e., the person who initiates a message. (ii) The *receiver* or *interpreter*, i.e., the person to whom a message is directed. (iii) The *message*, i.e., the verbal and/or nonverbal content that must be encoded by the sender and decoded by the receiver. (iv) The *channel*, i.e., the *medium* by which the message is delivered and received. (v) The *context*, i.e., the setting and situation in which communication takes place. (vi) *noise*, i.e., anything that interferes with the accurate expression or reception of a message. (vii) *feedback*, i.e., a response from the receiver indicating whether a message has been received in its intended form. [11] added that professional communication between college/department administrators requires the following: (i) Developing information and support contacts inside and outside the institution. (ii) Keeping the lines of communication with the contacts open at all times. (iii) Keeping up with current events. (iv) Entering into all interactions.

In the present study, the *sender* is the college or department administrators; The *receivers* are the students following the account; the *channel* is twitter,

**Table 1. College and department twitter account demographics**

<b>Gender</b>	<b>PNU</b>	<b>KSU</b>	<b>KSU</b>	<b>KKU</b>	<b>DhJ</b>	<b>RC</b>	<b>QU</b>	<b>MU</b>	<b>SU</b>
	<b>F</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>M -F</b>	<b>M -F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>F</b>
Tweets	853	524	364	475	761	126	522	354	231
Followers	5378	3150	1957	533	434	325	1799	310	474
Photos	177	119	62	99	90	19	50	15	72
Date of joining Twitter	Dec 2011	Oct 2011	Aug 2013	Nov 2013	June 2013	Sep 2013	Feb 2014	Dec 2012	Mar 2014

<sup>1</sup> <http://education-portal.com/academy/lesson/what-is-the-communication-process-definition-steps.html>

the *message* is the tweet content; the *context* is the language, literature or translation department/college, and university setting as a whole.

Based on the elements of the communication process defined above, a system for analyzing the tweet content that consists of communication categories, together with comprehensive examples illustrating each category was created. In addition, the author skimmed through all of the tweets in all of the accounts to have a feel for the issues tweeted and the administrator-student interaction features. The system was, first, tried out on a sample of tweets from each account and necessary amendments were made. The tweet content analysis system consists of the following categories:

1. Giving information and process facilitation about: (i) Logistics such as admission, registration, drop-add, withdrawal, transferring, exams, courses, closed course sections, schedule conflicts, graduation project, graduation, advising, ID cards, banning, exams, grades, tuition, summer courses, faculty announcements; course and exam schedules, deadlines, bus departure times, university calendar; Location of colleges, centers, classes, meetings or a particular service. (ii) Conferences,

symposia, lectures, meetings, exhibits inside and outside the university. (iii) Job announcements for both students and faculty. (iv) University functions such as Campaigns receptions, ceremonies, students' clubs, extra-curricular cultural activities such as Translators' Day, certain Language Days, student elections and others. (v) Community events such as Diabetes Day, Janadriya Festival, the National Day...etc. (vi) Information about university services, department and college goals, vision and mission, rules and regulations, faculty contributions, reports, directives, books. (vii) Latest university/ college/department events (news) such as class cancellations due to weather conditions or by faculty, holidays, deaths, awards, moving to a new campus and buildings, visits by officials, appointments and others. (viii) Instructional announcements such as links to language learning websites, movies, videos, remedial classes, language learning and translation tips, grammar explanations, vocabulary with translation, verb tenses, listening and speaking practice, translation of verses from the Quran. (ix) Self-improvement tips, supplications and inspirational quotes.

2. Interaction (dialogue) between administrators and followers such as: (i)

Giving and receiving feedback. (ii) Requesting students to do something such as filling out forms, evaluating courses, collecting certificates and graduation robes, contacting a specific person to solve a problem or for follow-up; making comments; submitting complaints and problems; giving suggestions and improvement ideas. (iii) Student-initiated tweets such as requesting information about faculty attendance, class cancellations, registration and drop-add issues; hashtags; compliments from students; and queries. (iv) Rapport and compliments: Use of emotions, greetings, congratulating, thanking, best wishes; Ramadan and Eid greetings, condolences. (v) Language used: English, Arabic or French; formal or informal; Standard or colloquial. (vi) Forms of addressing students: Dear, beautiful graduates; formal address. (vii) Non-verbal communication: Use of smileys and images. (viii) Providing contact information: e-mail, faculty website, Twitter or Facebook account, college iPhone App, office hours, consultation hotline; a contact number; proceed to an office; contact a person.

3. Miscellaneous such as multiple photos of the same event, repetitions of the same announcements, redirecting followers to a Facebook page.

Each tweet was classified under one category only. Tweets related to a particular category were tallied and quantified. For each institution, the percentage of tweets in each category was computed and results were tabulated.

For reliability and validity purposes, a sample of tweets from each Twitter account was categorized, tallied and quantified for a second time after two weeks to check inconsistencies in classifying and quantifying the tweets. Both analyses were compared and discrepancies were solved.

## 2.4 Interview-questionnaires

An interview-questionnaire survey was used to assess students and administrators' views of the benefits and shortcomings of Twitter college/department accounts. The survey used the following questions: (i) Do you have a Twitter account? (ii) Do you follow the college or department Twitter account; (iii) What kind of information does the college or department tweet? (iv) Which is better Twitter or traditional paper announcements? Why? (v) What are the shortcomings of using Twitter account by the college or department? (vi) Does Twitter make a difference? Students answered all 6 questions, whereas administrators answered the last 4 questions. Students and administrators were individually interviewed face-to-face or by phone, and their responses were recorded. All responses were tallied and summarized. Results will be reported qualitatively and quantitatively for both students and administrators.

## 2.5 Statistical Analysis

Results of the content analysis of the tweets in each communication category were computed in percentages; whereas student and administrator responses to the interview questions were categorized and will be reported qualitatively.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 3.1 Results of the Tweet Content Analysis

Results of the tweet content analysis are shown in Table 2. It was found that only 20 language, literature and translation colleges and departments at 10 universities, i.e., 34% of Saudi state institutions offering language, literature and/or translation programs have an official Twitter account. 66% of the language and translation departments do not have a Twitter account yet. The earliest department in the sample joined Twitter in October 2011 and the latest in March 2014. The number of tweets in the sample ranged between 231 and 853 with a median of 475 and the number of followers ranges between 310 and 5378, with a median of 533. Compared to personal Twitter accounts, college and

department accounts have far fewer tweets, followers and tweet content.

Results showed Twitter is mainly used for announcements, with variations existing among the institutions in the content and communication subcategories covered and the percentage of tweets allocated to them. PNU, KSU-M, KSU-F and MU tweets covered almost all content and communication categories in Table 2. Between 33.5% and 75% of the tweets of the 7 institutions in Table 2 were devoted to logistics issues, process facilitation and providing information about admission, registration, transfer, drop-add, exams, deadlines...etc. Due to limitation of the tweet length to 140 characters, images of memos, rules, forms and schedules, course and class lists, in

addition to photos of activities and functions held by the students and faculty were used.

On the contrary, focus on logistics at KKU and its DJ branch was minimal (3% and 6% respectively), as their tweets mainly focused on language learning and translation skill development (68% and 48% of the tweets respectively).

Results also showed that between 15% and 42% of the tweets were devoted to conferences and meetings announcements, job vacancies, students' extra-curricular activities and community events, publicizing university services and university and college news. Here again, images of detailed paper announcements were attached.

**Table 2. Tweet content categories in percentages per institution**

Please check table 2

	PNU	KSU-	KSU-	KKU	DJ	RC	QU	MU	SU
	F	M	F	M-F	F	F	F	F	F
Logistics & procedures	39	18.6	36	3	6	74	33.5	63	73
Conferences & workshops	9	11	7	5	10.5		2	1	4
Job announcements	>1	1.7	>1						
University and community events, functions, activities	13	15	22	15	12.4		>1	11.8	11.5
Info about university services	9	7	9.6	>1	1.6	20.6	1	>1	2
Latest events (news)	4	7.7	2	3.4	4.7		12	2.8	2
Instructional (language learning)	2	7	1	68	48	2	-	4	-
Self-improvement & inspirational quotes	>1	2	6.7	2	12	-	-	2	2
Student-initiated tweets	2	7.8	>1	-	-	-		>1	-

Specific students or groups	2	5	2	-	>1		1.6	>1	>1
Providing contact info	5	4	2.4	>1	1	3	1.6	10	4
Providing & receiving feedback	3	1.5	5.5	-	>1	-	-	>1	-
Greetings & compliments	7	7	3	>1	>1	-	39	>1	>1
Miscellaneous	3	4	>1	2	11.6	-	8	1.7	-

DJ and KSU-F also tweeted self-improvement tips, inspirational quotes and verses from the Quran (12%

and 6.7% respectively). Those were either absent or very limited at other institutions.

As for interaction between administrators and students, results of the content analysis showed that The highest interaction was explicit in 50% of the total QU tweets, followed by KSU-M (29%) and PNU (22%). Here, administrator tweets contained greetings such as *Good morning & Salam Alaykom*, congratulations, thank-you notes, best wishes. Administrators requested students to fill out evaluation surveys and collect forms and graduation robes. QU used colorful smileys, hearts and stars to show emotions. Tweets of three institutions encouraged students to submit complaints, suggestions and ideas for improvement, or contact a specific person to help solve a problem for specific students. Student-initiated tweets were evident in limited occasions where students asked about class cancellations, made comments and compliments, and participated in hashtags. Tweets that provide contact information by administrators constituted less than 5%.

In most tweets, the forms of address were formal, except at QU where *dear students, our beautiful graduates* and informal greetings were used in 11% of the tweets. Standard Arabic is the main

medium of communication in the tweets; English and French were used in less than 5% and 1% of the tweets respectively. Even in language learning tweets, Arabic was used for explanations, word meaning and translation. Occasional greetings and inspirational quotes were tweeted in English. Colloquial non-standard Arabic was used in student tweets and in administrator responses to questions and occasional announcements.

Retweets (R) and favorites (F) of announcements also varied among the institutions and within categories. About half the tweets were not retweeted, nor favorited. Some were retweeted or favorite between 1-3 times. Tweets with the highest retweets were those about class cancellations due to weather conditions (5.2k R); official holidays (735 R); printing the class schedules (470 R); and university calendar (345 R); in addition to language learning tweets that received between 219 and 943 retweets. Language learning tweets also received the highest favorites: Some inspirational quotes (232F) and language websites (219 F).

Finally, no significant differences between male and female institution Twitter accounts were found in the types of issues tweeted, with variations existing among the 9 institutions in the percentage of tweets devoted to the communication and announcement categories and subcategories. This is probably because, both male and female counterpart departments follow the same regulations and procedures, hold the



same functions and activities and have the same academic problems.

### 3.2 Results of the Student and Administrator Interviews

Results of the interviews revealed that 90% of the students majoring in English and translation find the college/department Twitter accounts very useful in getting quick and brief notifications of the department logistics and functions. They receive instant information in the convenience of their homes, without having to go to college to check paper announcements and contact people who might be busy or out of the office. They do not have to go to the university or can leave early if class is cancelled. This is due to the fact that most of the students own a smart phone and they have free internet access on campus. The students reported that they feel more valued and important as issues related to their academic life inside and outside the university are addressed by the tweets. They are also informed of current university and college events and facilities. They receive clarifications about procedures and rules and regulations. Overall, all of the students in the sample preferred Twitter to paper announcements and email as they are faster and easier to follow.

Similarly, all of the administrators in the sample reported that Twitter is a convenient way to make instant announcement about common issues that students have, about emerging deadline, change of schedule, class cancellations, and latest news and events. They can reach more students than paper announcements posted on the college walls which students may not notice, or may read after the deadline is over. 70% indicated that having a Twitter account with students as followers makes the college/department feel like one family. It brings them close to each other and gives them a sense of connectedness.

Hind, a vice-dean says:

*"Having a Twitter account, with students as followers, makes us feel like one family. It gives us a sense of closeness and intimacy."*

Another department head, Dania noted:

*"Twitter breaks the ice that exists in administrator-students relationship."*

Sara, a translation student, indicated:

*"Twitter keeps us informed of what's going on in the department. Tweets from the department head and college dean make us feel important, and not just anonymous students."*

Lateefa, a translation student responded:

*"I find photos tweeted very useful especially those of exam schedules as I can favorite or download them to my mobile phone and refer to them later."*

Fatima, a junior French major, stated:

*"I wish our French Department has a Twitter account and communicate with us like our friends at the English Department. We do not feel the same rapport as our friends do with their department head."*

Ghada, a sophomore French major, added:

*"We miss being notified about course issues and department activities through Twitter. Sometimes we see and read paper announcements after the deadline is over."*

The above findings are consistent with findings of other studies conducted in the USA, Turkey, Australia and Canada about the uses of Facebook and Twitter. Since the current study is all-inclusive and covers a wide range of issues in administrator-student communication via, findings of the prior studies cited below agree with specific findings of the present study. For example, [8] found that scholars participating on Twitter shared information, resources, and media relating to their professional practice; shared information about their classrooms and students; requested help from and offered suggestions to others; engaged in social commentary; engaged in digital identity and impression management; networked and made connections with others. In Turkey, [5] found that Twitter provides a faster, easier and economical means of interaction with the target audience in different parts of the world. In Australia, universities are using social media communication channels for marketing, student

recruitment, student support and alumni communication [6]. Another Canadian study by [12] investigated how 106 universities used social media as a tool for institutional branding, recruitment and engagement of home and international students. The researchers found that most of these university-led postings related to campus/student news and events. Twitter and other social networks made it easier for school administrators to get the word out, and to collect important feedback from parents, teachers, and students [13]. In addition, school leaders used Twitter for educational purposes and as a way to create communities of practice that focus on educational issues [14].

Likewise, the positive attitudes and viewpoints towards having an academic Twitter account for the college or department, expressed by the participants at the sample institutions, is consistent with findings of two prior studies. In the first study, [9] found that doctoral students in the USA who used peer and university initiated technology outside the classroom had a higher sense of connectedness than those who did not. Those who used web-based communication technologies such as Skype, Facebook, and Twitter had a stronger sense of connectedness with their peers than those who chose to interact with peers via the phone or e-mail. In the second study, [10] argued that even non-academic interactions between students and faculty, make students feel more valued and important, which in turn, may contribute to higher levels of student persistence.

### **3.3 Shortcomings of Using Twitter as a Student-Administrator Communication Tool**

Despite the many benefits of using Twitter as a communication tool between administrators and students at the sample institutions in Saudi Arabia, there are few shortcomings. First, 9% of the students do not have a Twitter account, deleted their Twitter account or do not know about the college Twitter account. Another 13% mentioned that they cannot keep up with the amount of tweets received especially in the registration period at the beginning of the semester, or exam

period at the end of the semester. There is no way to screen those tweets relevant to them and those that are not. About 54% reported that they feel shy and apprehensive of posting queries and interactions in public. They are hesitant to use their real names and prefer to pose their questions face-to-face. A fourth shortcoming is that 17% reported that they posted questions, but never received answers from the college administrators or they sometimes received late answers.

Some of the shortcomings that 47% of the administrators interviewed mentioned was lack of time for tweeting by themselves, due to having other responsibilities, in which case they assign a T.A., a secretary or students to make the tweets and retweets. About 58% cannot respond to all the queries they receive. Examples of shortcomings mentioned by some administrators and students were:

Department head Sarah reported:

*"Twitter does not solve all academic issues and face-to-face contacts are indispensable. Students still come to my office for my signature and to solve certain registration and drop-add issues and problems."*

Maryam, a freshman student explained:

*"I had to go to my advisor and department head to help me sort out conflicts in my course schedule for the semester."*

Junior student Salwa added:

*"I had to contact the department head when sections of a course are closed and I need to register in the course as it is a requirement, and I cannot proceed to subsequent courses I have to take in upcoming semesters, without having taken the course."*

Here again, findings of the present study agree with findings of an Indonesian study by [15]. Like Indonesian students in [15] who had positive attitudes towards ICT, but preferred face-to-face interaction; Saudi students in the present study preferred Twitter announcement to email and paper announcement, but preferred face-to-face

communication whenever they have a query or need to solve a problem.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The present study analyzed the tweet content of official Saudi language, literature and translation college/department Twitter accounts to find out the types of issues tweeted and characteristics of administrator-student interaction. Students and administrators were also interviewed to find out how they perceive their college Twitter accounts and their advantages and drawback. It was found that administrators at the sample institutions mainly tweet announcements about logistics, university events and news, conferences and meetings, extra-curricular activities, language learning, self-improvement and inspirational quotes. Both students and administrators expressed positive attitudes towards Twitter as a tool for making announcements and tweeting information related to the students' academic life. However, few shortcomings were pointed out. To overcome the shortcomings of using Twitter in administrator student communication such as the bulk and variety of tweets received by the students, separate Twitter accounts can be created for specific target groups, events or issues such as: Preparatory Year, graduating seniors, graduate students, extracurricular activities and events, logistics and so on. Students can be informed of those accounts by receiving an SMS on their smart phones through the university SMS Tawasul System. An outline of topics and issues to be tweeted can be made. Repetitious topics such as those related to course registration, drop-add and rules, regulations and procedures can be hash-tagged to enable students to locate them. To make the best out of Twitter as a quick and effective social medium, language, literature and translation departments and colleges at other higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia should be encouraged by the Ministry of Education to start a Twitter account. The uses and purposes of other social media in instruction or administration, by Saudi universities, is still open for further investigation.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

#### REFERENCES

- [1] K Wakefield. Should professors use Facebook to communicate with students? EdTech News and Trends.2012;February 27.
- [2] S Jacquemin, L Smelser, M Bernot. Twitter in the higher education classroom: A student and faculty assessment of use and perception. Journal of College Science Teaching. 2014; 43(6):22-27.
- [3] J Young. Forget e-Mail: New messaging service has students and professors a Twitter'. Chronicle of Higher Education. 2008;54(25): pA15.
- [4] A Gittner. To tweet or not to tweet... that is the question. Education in Science, 2011;2(44):10-11.
- [5] O Yolcu. Twitter usage of universities in Turkey. Turkish Online Journal of Educational Technology – TOJET. 2013;12(2):360-371.
- [6] S Palmer. Characterisation of the use of twitter by Australian universities. Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management. 2013;35 (4):333-344.
- [7] S Prestridge. A Focus on students' use of twitter--their interactions with each other, content and interface. Active Learning in Higher Education. 2014;15(2):101-115.
- [8] G Veletsianos. Higher education scholars' participation and practices on Twitter. Journal of Computer Assisted Learning. 2012;28(4): 336-349.
- [9] A Rockinson-Szapkiw, L Heuvelman-Hutchinson, L Spaulding. Connecting online: Can social networking and other technology support doctoral connectedness? Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice. 2014;11(3).
- [10] B Cox, E Orehovec. Faculty-student interaction outside the classroom: A typology from a residential college. The

- Review of Higher Education. 2007;30(4):343-362.
- [11] H Goodall Jr., S Goodall, J Schiefelbein. Business and professional communication in the global workplace. 3rd Edn. Wadsworth; 2010.
- [12] C Bélanger, S Bali, B Longden. How Canadian universities use social media to brand themselves. Tertiary Education and Management. 2014;20, (1):14-29.
- [13] P Larkin. Say it with social media. Educational Leadership. 2015;72(7):66-69.
- [14] N Sauers, J Richardson. Leading by Following: An Analysis of How K-12 School Leaders Use Twitter. NASSP Bulletin. 2015; 99(2):127-146.
- [15] Y Yuyun, N Supriani. Implementing ICT for students of faculty of teacher training and education in Yogyakarta, In Peterson J, Lee O, Islam T, Piscioneri M, editors. Effectively Implementing Information Communication Technology in Higher Education in the Asia-Pacific Region. Nova Science Publishers. 2012:265-272.
- [16] R. Al-Jarf, (2005). Connecting Students across Universities in Saudi Arabia. 4th Asia CALL Conference. ERIC ED497940. [Google Scholar](#)
- [17] R. Al-Jarf (2006). Hearing Students' Voices: Communication, Interaction and Learning via University Students' Forums in Saudi Arabia. 8<sup>th</sup> Association of Business Communication (ABC) Convention on "Dialogue - Challenge and Opportunity". BI Norwegian Business School, Oslo, Norway. June 8-10, 2006. ERIC ED618420. [Google Scholar](#)
- [18] R. Al-Jarf (2009). Connecting the EFL classroom with local and global communities. International Conference in Education, University of Brunei. Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei. <https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Reima-Al-Jarf/publication/352882001>. [Google Scholar](#)
- [19] Al-Jarf, R. (2011). Communicating and Interacting with College Students through a Website Chatbox. 16<sup>th</sup> TCC Worldwide Online Conference, Apr 12-14, 2011. ERIC ED614583. [Google Scholar](#)
- [20] R. Al-Jarf (2012). Connecting Students, Faculty and Administrators through Online SMS. 17th TCC Online Conference titled "Emerging Technologies". April 17-19. ERIC ED614361. [Google Scholar](#)